

VZCZCXYZ0004
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHSW #0137 0861750
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 271750Z MAR 09
FM AMEMBASSY BERN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5748
INFO RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 0618
RUEHSI/AMEMBASSY TBILISI 0055

C O N F I D E N T I A L BERN 000137

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR/RUS AND EUR/CE (Y.SAINT-ANDRE)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/23/2029
TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [PBTS](#) [GG](#) [RS](#) [SZ](#)
SUBJECT: SWISS VIEWS ON ABKHAZIA/SOUTH OSSETIA AND RUSSIAN
BASING PLANS

REF: A. STATE 24186
[1](#)B. MOSCOW 645

Classified By: A/DCM Richard A. Rorvig; reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Poloff delivered the reftel A message March 20 to Norbert Baerlocher, Regional Coordinator for Eastern Europe and Central Asia at the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA). Baerlocher underlined that Switzerland shares USG concerns regarding Russian basing plans and regarding any actions that could be viewed as conferring recognition on Abkhazia or South Ossetia. He said that the GOS only deals with issues in Abkhazia or South Ossetia via the Swiss embassy in Tbilisi. To illustrate the point, he remarked that the Swiss Development Corporation (SDC) has some programs in the North Caucasus region of the Russian Federation. Contacts in that region had recently suggested to the SDC that it expand its programs into South Ossetia, which the GOS flatly refused, insisting that any programming in South Ossetia would have to be via Georgia. Baerlocher also emphasized that the GOS does not accept "passports" from Abkhazia or South Ossetia for travel to Switzerland.

[1](#)2. (C) Baerlocher said that he was pleased that Georgia had asked Switzerland to serve as its Protecting Power in Moscow (reftel B). He commented that this obligation allows Switzerland more easily to maintain "equidistance" toward Moscow in performing Switzerland's Protecting Power role for the Russians Tbilisi.
CARTER